

Good morning members of the State Legislature;

My name is Dave Yedresek and I am a mental health worker. I am a case manager within the mental health field and I work with the mentally ill every day. I have approximately 20 severely mentally ill clients that I case manage and I can tell you from personal experience that gun legislation is not the answer to this problem.

This is a mental health problem; and the problem is funding. Connecticut's DMHAS and its system of mental health is probably one of the best in the country but it is seriously underfunded. I say this because

when funding is not available resources get spread thin. When resources get spread thin then case managers like myself will be reduced so that our case loads become so large that we as case managers are less available to respond to crises when they occur. This causes great anxiety in our clients when we are not there for them when they need us. If the source of the anxiety isn't addressed their behavior escalates which often leads to threats and aggressive behavior. This sets into motion a whole cascade of events: mobile crisis has to be called, police are involved, an ambulance is sent. They are taken to the ER and may be admitted to a psychiatric unit for several days and maybe arrested. The courts sometimes get involved as do state paid, court-appointed defense lawyers.

This not only becomes traumatic for our clients and their families as well but takes place at a great expense to the state. As support begins to diminish this same scenario begins to play out for many of our clients across the state costing the state millions of dollars.

Properly case managed clients plays out a little differently. When case managed clients begin to feel the effects of decompensation their residence begins to notice and lets us know in their morning report that we receive every morning and their case manager gets notified immediately. When their case manager (such as myself) is notified, I notify their visiting nurse, their therapist, their prescriber and the director of our program. Within a couple of days we get them in to see their prescriber to discuss symptoms and medication. Many times if a change is made it would be a minor one given the issue is addressed immediately and the client is seen within a day or so by their therapist. The rest home staff or their roommates or the visiting nurse then watches for signs that the change in meds is effective and gives daily progress reports when necessary. If the increase in symptoms is abated then the crisis is averted and things return to normal. If the increase in symptoms is noted, another adjustment is made and again the crisis is averted. No mobile crisis, no ambulance, no ER, no hospital, no police, no courts and above all no trauma for the client. In other words the situation is handled long before symptoms become severe enough to require the extreme intervention outlined above. As you can see, it is far cheaper to case manage and fund the systems already in place than to de-fund and look to save money. With the money saved we could fund some public service announcements encouraging parents to pay attention to the possible clues we get from our children that may point to mental illness. Millions of dollars are spent every year on public service announcements relating to the dangers of smoking.

Remember; mental illness is just that; an illness. A treatable illness. An illness that many parents, because of the stigma associated with it, choose to either ignore or deny until it becomes so serious that hospitalization may be necessary or they become involved in the criminal justice system. The chronically mentally ill with such illnesses such as schizophrenia or schizo-affective disorder are troubled and anguished people. They suffer from symptoms such as auditory hallucinations (voices screaming in their heads) to visual hallucinations. Medications do a really job of controlling this but our clients are still tormented by the voices. They can go on for years and in addition to medication they still do their best to try and ignore them. My point is that certain mental illnesses cause some clients to be tortured and tormented everyday of their lives by voices inside themselves that can barely be contained. When we hear someone say that "jesus told them to do it," that's not some

dodge to escape responsibility for what they might have done. That is not some excuse to avoid criminal responsibility for an act. That is their reality. That is what they experience every day of their lives. They can't come here today to speak before you. Someone, such as myself and other mental health workers must speak for them.

Many parents, who would otherwise rush to treat a child with a broken leg or diabetes or cancer or epilepsy, balk at mental health treatment for fear of the stigma associated with it. Well meaning parents will use excuses such as, "well, he (or she) will grow out of it" or "it's just a phase they are going through" or "they're just a little overactive" or "my son (or daughter) is not crazy" or worse yet, "they just need more discipline." Have you ever tried to heal a broken leg with "discipline"? Public service announcement can serve to remove some of that stigma and prompt parents to seek mental health treatment for children that are suspected of having difficulties.

This problem cannot and will not be helped with some feel-good gun legislation that serves only to placate the masses into believing the problem is handled. The anti-gun lobby and the Newtown people are desperately clinging to the hope that another gun law will prevent this. That is 100% false.

Our hearts are torn apart from what happened in Newtown. I was affected so badly that I couldn't even read about it or listen to the news about it. I can't even really talk about. My god, I have two children of my own; a 6 year old and a 2 year old. If I thought a piece of gun legislation would save their lives don't you think that I would endorse it in a moment?

This is not a gun problem. It is a mental health problem and if this issue of mental health is not addressed another Newtown WILL happen. Not might, but WILL. Because of "Case management" many of the clients that I case manage are recovering. Some are now living independantly. Some have jobs which means they are now taxpayers. This mental health system is now being partially funded by taxes paid by the mentall ill that are now taxpayers. That is what recovery is all about.

I am asking two things; first of all, please, do your sworn duty and support and defend the constitution of the United States and the State of Connecticut and do not attempt to legislate more gun laws. They are nothing but ink on paper and are totally ignored by those wishing to do us harm.

Second; increase DMHAS funding and funding for mental health services so that those needing mental health treatment get it. At the same time, enact legislation forcing insurance companies to cover mental health services in the same way they cover any other kind of health issue.

THAT is what we owe our children, not feel-good gun legislation that FBI statistics have proven over and over have never prevented a single crime. Witness Chicago; a city with the most anti gun laws on the books and yet the highest gun crime city in the nation. (SEE ATTACHED REPORT)

Please if you don't believe a single thing anyone has ever said to you about this issue, BELIEVE THIS.

Please, find the money. Include it in the budget. If you don't budget the money now, we, the taxpayers WILL pay later, and at a much higher cost.

IT IS A MATHEMATICAL CERTAINTY.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak

Dave Yedresek

446 school age children shot in Chicago so far this year with strongest gun laws in country – media silent

- Posted by [crashaxe](#) on December 20, 2012 at 7:46am in
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The cesspool known as Chicago probably has the toughest gun laws in the country, yet despite all the shootings, murders, and bloodshed, you never hear a peep about this from the corrupt state run media. In Chicago, there have been 446 school age children shot in leftist utopia run by Rahm Emanuel and that produced Obama, Jesse Jackson, Louis Farrakhan, etc. 62 school aged children have actually been killed by crazed nuts in Chicago so far this year with almost two weeks to go. So why isn't this news worthy? Is it because it would embarrass those anti second amendment nuts who brag about Chicago's tough gun laws? Is it because most of the kids who were shot and killed were minorities? Or is it because the corrupt media doesn't want to show Chicago in a bad light? Amazingly, no Obama crocodile tears either.

For those of you too dense to get the point of this post, it's to make the point about gun laws. No matter how tough the gun laws are, the crazed, nut jobs will find a way to get them and if they so chose, use them. No draconian law can stop this, no matter how well intentioned the law is, or if it's just about leftists grabbing power from citizens and taking away their constitutional rights.

THE LIST OF MURDERED SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN 2012

18 YEARS OLD- 15

17 YEARS OLD- 16

16 YEARS OLD- 16

15 YEARS OLD- 6

14 YEARS OLD- 4

13 YEARS OLD- 2

12 YEARS OLD- 1

7 YEARS OLD- 1

6 YEARS OLD- 1

446 School Age Children Shot in Chicago so Far This Year THE LIST OF SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN SHOT IN 2012

18 year old- 110

17 year old- 99

16 year old- 89

15 year old- 62

14 year old- 39

13 year old- 21

12 year old- 10

11 year old- 2

10 year old- 3

9 year old- 1

7 year old- 3

6 year old- 2

5 year old- 1

4 year old- 1

3 year old- 1

1 year old- 2